

# Seminar in Psychological Research PSY 4321; spring 2010

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**Office Hours:** M,W: 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.; TR 8 a.m. – 12 p.m.; or by appointment  
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**Course Web Site:** <http://blackboard.angelo.edu>

## Required Texts

Jackson, S.L. (2006). *Research Methods and Statistics: A critical thinking approach, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*. Belmont, CA: Thomson/Wadsworth.

## Course Description and Objectives

The purpose of this seminar is to give you practical experience in conducting empirical research and disseminating your findings. Because this is an *experiential* seminar, you will design and conduct a research project. A written report of your research project will be due at the end of the semester. You may collaborate with others on the same project, but you will turn in individually written reports.

To help you with your research project, we will discuss the myriad details of doing research and communicating findings. We will also read and discuss individual research articles with the aim of learning directly from the work of successful researchers.

## Course Requirements

**1. Research Project & Written Report.** You will conduct one research study and write a report of your project using the format and APA style outlined in your textbook.

**A. Research topic selection process.** The topic of your research project will be a group decision. I will assign you to a work group comprised of up to 3 members. Each group will name itself and I will open a forum on the Bb Discussion Boards for the exclusive use of each student group. Within each group discussion board forum, you will discuss ideas for a suitable research project. Everyone in your group will work on the same research project. Each of you will write your own paper. So, selection of a research topic and conducting the research is a collective effort; your paper is an individual effort.

You are responsible for the conduct of your research project, which must conform to the guidelines for classroom projects: <http://www.angelo.edu/forms/doc/GuidelinesforClassroomProjects.doc>.

**B. Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval & Mid-Term Exam.** Before you can begin collecting data to address your research question, you must submit a proposal to the IRB (<http://www.angelo.edu/forms/doc/asu.doc>) requesting permission from the IRB to conduct your research project. The proposal will include an informed consent form (<http://www.angelo.edu/forms/doc/SampleInformedConsent.doc>), a debriefing document, as well as supporting materials.

After obtaining IRB approval, you will recruit participants via Sona-Systems and collect data. Immediately after you finish collecting data the names of participants must be given to me so that I can give your participants extra credit.

Your completed Institutional Review Board research proposal will be graded and count as 20% of your final course grade.

**C. Research Report Format.** Your written research report will include a title page, an abstract, an introduction, a method section, a results section, a discussion, references, and any tables or figures you find necessary. Your paper will also include appendices of any materials used in your study (e.g., photos, prose passages, questionnaires,...). The body of your research report (introduction through discussion section) should be about 10 pages. The research project will be a collaborative effort; the written report will be an individual effort.

Your research project and written report and will count as 50% of your course grade.

**2. Homework Assignments.** You will be given at least one homework assignment per week. These assignments will help you learn skills needed to conduct and disseminate empirical research. Each assignment will have a specific due date and must be handed in during class. No late assignments will be accepted. Your assignments will be graded satisfactory or unsatisfactory and will count as 20% of your course grade.

**3. Participation & attendance.** The primary format of the course is guided participation and discussion, which will comprise 10% of your final course grade. You will learn many of the techniques and details of conducting competent research as a result of participating in seminar discussions. Consequently, I expect you to prepare for each class by completing all assignments and readings before class, actively participating in seminar discussions, collaborating with other students, attending class, and refraining from boorish behavior (viz., constant texting, habitually arriving late). The benefits of taking an active part in learning is a more satisfying classroom experience.

**4. Academic Integrity.** Angelo State University expects its students to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits. Students are responsible for understanding the Academic Honor Code, which is available on the web at <http://www.angelo.edu/forms/pdf/honorcode5.pdf>

[Turnitin \(http://www.turnitin.com/static/index.html\)](http://www.turnitin.com/static/index.html) is a plagiarism detection web site you will use to submit your research paper.

**5. Disabilities.** Persons with disabilities which warrant academic accommodations must contact the Student Life Office, Room 112 University Center, in order to request such accommodations prior to their being implemented. You are encouraged to make this request early in the semester so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

### Grade Scale (%)

**A = 90-100   B = 80-89   C = 70-79   D = 60-69**

Date	Topic
Jan-Feb	Introduction  American Psychological Society Where do Research Ideas Come From? Asking Empirical Questions  Conducting a Literature Review: Library & Web Adventures & Interlibrary Loans  Drafting Hypotheses & Operational Definitions  Experimental Design Assignment: Create Excel file for Data Entry: label all variables, conditions, levels, ...  <b>In Class Presentations of Proposed Research Seminar Project</b>  <b>Obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval</b> <a href="http://www.angelo.edu/forms/doc/Guidelines_for_Classroom_Projects.doc">http://www.angelo.edu/forms/doc/Guidelines_for_Classroom_Projects.doc</a> <a href="http://www.angelo.edu/forms/doc/asu.doc">http://www.angelo.edu/forms/doc/asu.doc</a> <a href="http://www.angelo.edu/forms/doc/Sample_Informed_Consent.doc">http://www.angelo.edu/forms/doc/Sample_Informed_Consent.doc</a>
March	<b>Mid-Term Examination: IRB Document is Due</b>  How to Treat Participants; Obtaining and Running Subjects; Keeping Records of Psychology Student Participants' Extra Credit  <b><i>Begin Collecting Data</i></b>  How to Write an Introduction  How to Write a Method Section  How to Write an Introductory Paragraph
April	How to Analyze & Interpret Your Data  How to Write a Results Section; How to Construct Figures & Tables  How to Write a Discussion Section  Disseminating Research Reports to Professional Psychologists  How to Write an Abstract
May	<b>Individually Written Research Report/Final Exam Due</b>

***Note: The course outline and schedule are subject to modification at my discretion.***